



The Front Porch

The Newsletter of the City of Springfield,
Planning and Development Department's
Neighborhood Conservation Office
Fall/Winter 2002 Issue

Mission:

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of our community. Springfield must strive to promote strong neighborhoods that instill pride in their residents. Therefore, the Neighborhood Conservation Office is committed to working with the Community to ensure strong viable neighborhoods.

Boarded and Dangerous Buildings Ordinance Takes Action

It has now been almost six months since the Boarded Buildings Ordinance took effect, and already the results can be seen around our city's neighborhoods. The ordinance targets all dangerous, blighted, and nuisance buildings, including boarded buildings. The goal of these new regulations is to rid neighborhoods of blighting and unsafe structures.

According to the quarterly report published by the Springfield Department of Building Development Services, 213 cases have been filed on boarded and dangerous buildings. Of those cases 130 properties have been corrected, and 83 cases are currently involved in the process. Properties where violations have been corrected include 35 demolished by the owner, 94 rehabilitated, and three demolished by the City of Springfield. The overall response to the ordinance has been positive. The community is beginning to see the process working and the number of boarded buildings is decreasing. This property on North Lyon (pictured) is one example of the success of the ordinance so far.

This once-boarded structure also had several housing code violations. After proceeding through the boarded and dangerous buildings process, it has since been rehabilitated by the owner. The windows and doors have been replaced and all of the previous violations have been corrected.



Before



After

Although we have seen several improvements in our city neighborhoods, this is only a result of concerned citizens notifying us of these structures. Because this ordinance is enforced on a complaint basis, (we do not have inspectors out looking for violations) it is important that you continue to call the Public Information Office if you know of a building with violations. Violations include any vacant building that is not properly secured with closed windows and doors, or any building that is boarded without the proper permits posted. Properties in deteriorating condition may also be turned in for housing code violations.

To report a building in violation please call the Public Information Office at **864-1010**. Thank you for your assistance in enforcing the Boarded and Dangerous Buildings Ordinance.

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Strengthen Your Neighborhood Through AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps provides many ways for you to make a difference in your neighborhood and your community. Right now AmeriCorps is looking for volunteers to take part in its exciting programs that work to make a difference for those in need. As a volunteer you can choose from a variety of the 1,000 local and national programs that focus on making communities safer, educating children, strengthening low-income communities, and protecting the environment. Many of these programs are run by organizations you may know of—like the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Clubs, or local community centers and places of wor-

ship. You decide where and how you want to serve. Along with the experience, volunteers also receive living allowances, health insurance, student loan deferment and training. Plus at the end of your 10-to-12 month term, you'll receive a \$4,725 education award to help pay for college, graduate school, or to pay off student loans. To qualify you must be at least 17 years old. To find the right program for you call 1-800-942-2677 to request an application or visit www.americorps.org

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Quality Ozark Streams... Start in OUR Backyard.

The City of Springfield is now required by Federal Law to develop and implement a plan to control the amount of pollution in our storm water runoff. Springfield is the first city in the state to receive the required permit to develop this plan. Keeping our streams and groundwater pollution free won't be easy though. Nothing worthwhile ever is. The *Springfield News-Leader* describes this undertaking as "an honor and a challenge". Every citizen of Springfield has an opportunity to make an important contribution.

Here's How You Can Make a Difference...

1. Dispose of yard waste properly.

Placing grass clippings, leaves and other yard waste in streets and ditches is a City ordinance violation, leads to increase flooding and degrades water quality. Consider composting or using the City's Yard Waste Recycling Center to dispose of yard waste without harming the environment.

2. Dispose of household chemicals properly.

Motor oil, pesticides and paints are chemicals that, if placed in the ground, can harm our streams or groundwater. These items may be taken to the City's Household Chemical Collections Center at no charge.

3. Fertilize smart!

Applying excess fertilizer is a waste of time, money and adds harmful nutrients to streams. To learn more about environmentally friendly lawn care call Show-Me-Yards and Neighborhoods at 864-2006.

4. Help watch for illegal dumping.

If you see someone dumping into a stream call the City's Storm Water Services Division at 864-1901.

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CITY of
SPRINGFIELD



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City-wide Neighborhood Planning Process Begins in Grant Beach

The Neighborhood Conservation Office is nearing completion of the city's first *Neighborhood Assessment*. Residents of the Grant Beach neighborhood participated in Springfield's first ever three hour *Neighborhood Assessment* workshop on Saturday, May 11 in Pipkin Middle School. The *Neighborhood Assessment* process, to be implemented city-wide, will be used to target neighborhood improvements, identify potential infrastructure projects, and identify where housing services and assistance programs are needed. *Neighborhood Assessment* has been adopted by City Council as a result of the Vision 20/20 *Neighborhoods Plan* outlining objectives to stabilize or improve existing neighborhoods and to create sustainable attractive new neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Assessment workshops are conducted in a relaxed atmosphere. Following some "ice-breaking" exercises, Grant Beach workshop participants were led by city staff through six steps utilizing a standard workbook. Grant Beach participants ultimately determined their neighborhood's assets, shortcomings and potential actions that could be taken to improve the neighborhood. *Neighborhood Assessments* differs from traditional neighborhood planning processes in that workshop participants also identified who should be expected to implement each action. Furthermore, the City of



City Council members Denny Whayne and Mary Collette attended the workshop to show their support and hear the opinions of neighborhood residents.

Springfield has committed to address priority actions that were identified by the workshop's participating citizens. As a result of the Grant Beach Neighborhood Assessment workshop, the City of Springfield and City Utilities have proposed the following action in Grant Beach:

- Undertaking immediate drainage improvements on some street segments and intersections.
- Scheduling long-term drainage improvements for the neighborhood.
- Adding bus shelters along high-use bus routes.
- Temporarily increasing animal control patrols for loose dogs.
- Recruiting participants for city-sponsored low interest housing rehabilitation programs.
- Locating funding for the continuation of annual neighborhood clean-ups.

These and other actions were reported to Grant Beach residents at a follow-up meeting held on September 16. While workshop participants had identified many goals that they would like to eventually attain, the City actions listed above demonstrate an immediate response to some of the specific needs of Grant Beach. These actions might not have been considered without the direction of Grant

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Workshop attendees interact with facilitators to create their own neighborhood objectives.



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Beach workshop participants. City Council is scheduled to consider this action plan in the near future.

Neighborhood Assessments will soon be coming to more neighborhoods. The program is to be utilized throughout all regions of the city within 5 years. In fact, the Neighborhood Conservation Office is already planning workshops for the Fairfield Acres, Heart of the Westside, Woodland Heights and Robberson neighborhoods before the end of 2002. It is the hope of the Neighborhood Conservation Office that public interest and participation will continue to enable and guide immediate and tangible improvements to Springfield's neighborhoods.

EP

Publication Spotlight

"Noise Ordinance Brochure"

Help us serve the community with a copy of the City of Springfield Noise Ordinance Brochure. We need your help to preserve and protect the peace and quiet of our city neighborhoods. This brochure provides information on the noise ordinances with examples of noise violations, and the steps involved in the complaint procedure. Copies of the Noise Ordinance Brochure are available at the Busch Municipal Building 840 N. Boonville Ave. or by mail. Call the Public Information office at (417) 864-1010 to receive your free copy today. Also view a copy of the brochure online at www.springfield.mogov.org/gov. **EP**



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